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ABSTRACT

Early socialization, cognitive differences, treatment by teachers, and curricular choices have a negative effect on both the self-esteem and academic achievement of young females. Program designers and policymakers should incorporate the following approaches into female dropout prevention programs: (1) academic encouragement; (2) counseling to improve female self-esteem; (3) coordination of services to meet females' academic and nonacademic needs; (4) bias-free interactions with teachers and administrators; and (5) encouragement for females to enter nontraditional courses and careers. The following programs illustrate effective approaches: (1) the Johns Hopkins Team Learning Project (Baltimore, Maryland); (2) Summer Training and Education Program (STEP) (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania); (3) Homework Hotline (San Diego, California); (4) Applied Leadership Training for Youth (Tucson, Arizona); (5) School Age Mother (SAM) (Beaver Dam, Wisconsin); (6) PEER Power (Chicago Public Schools, Illinois); (7) the Discovery Links Project (Klamath Falls, Oregon); (8) the Early Single Parenting Project (San Francisco, California); (9) Think Again (Huron, South Dakota); (10) the Family Learning Center (Leslie, Michigan); (11) School-based, Noncurricular Model for Pregnant and Parenting Teens (National Association of State Boards of Education); (12) Gender/Ethnic Expectations and Student Achievement (GESA); (13) Expanding Staff Potential in High Technology (ESP) Seminars (Hanceville, Alabama); (14) Ysleta Girls Count! (El Paso, Texas); (15) Choices (Girls Clubs of America); (16) Choices Initiative in Wisconsin; and (17) the Job Corps (U.S. Department of Labor). Initiatives in six states illustrate how policymakers can help at-risk youth of both sexes. Lists of the promising programs and state initiatives, and a list of 46 references are appended. (FMW)

Includes 10 practical recommendations for programs that deal with girls at risk

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Female Dropouts

A New Perspective

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For the first time, we have a clear picture of who these girls are and the reasons that they leave . . .

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Alexandria, Virginia

Women's Educational Equity Act Program
U.S. Department of Education

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Female Dropouts

A New Perspective

Female Dropouts

A New Perspective

by
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with
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edited by
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National Association of State Boards of Education
Alexandria, Virginia

Women's Educational Equity Act Program
U.S. Department of Education
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National Association of State Boards of Education

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Executive Summary

When people think of students who are most likely to drop out, they think first of disruptive boys, and then of pregnant girls. This stereotype does not reflect reality. Girls and boys drop out of school at approximately the same rate. Further, although 40 percent of girls who drop out are pregnant or getting married, the majority of girls who drop out are not.

The consequences of dropping out are most disastrous for urban minority women. Once they have left school, minority girls are far less likely to return and complete their education. And because 49 percent of families in poverty are headed by a female dropout, the future of these young women is particularly grim.

In our effort to shed light on the question of female dropout, we discovered that the factors leading girls to drop out sometimes appear similar and sometimes different from the factors leading boys to drop out. There is clearly much about the process that we still don't know. Part 1 of this book will pull together a variety of research efforts focused on dropping out, female socialization, cognitive styles, and teacher interactions.

In attempting to unravel a variety of research strands, we were able to identify a set of background characteristics and school-related factors that can result in young women leaving school before completion. Some background characteristics associated with dropping out apply equally to girls and boys. These include low socioeconomic status, minority status, and low parental education levels. Another set of background characteristics seem to influence more female than male dropouts. These include having a large number of siblings and the mother's educational level.

The school-related factors that affect dropping out include low academic achievement and low self-esteem. The factors that particularly impact girls are early socialization experiences that teach girls to be less assertive, cognitive differences in the ways that many girls and boys learn, teacher interaction patterns that favor boys' response patterns and learning styles, and curricular selections that often leave girls without the prerequisites for higher-paying jobs and careers. When these factors combine with the background characteristics mentioned above, girls who are only marginally involved in school may opt out completely.

What are the implications of this perspective for educators, programmers, policymakers, and researchers?

Program designers who address the issue of female dropout need to be aware that girls may need special attention: attention to enhance their self-esteem, attention to remediation that takes into account some of the differences between

boys and girls, attention by teachers to how they respond to students in the classroom, attention by administrators to create school environments that are flexible enough to meet student needs, and attention by the community so that those in health, social services, and employment collaborate closely with schools to assure students access to a variety of needed services.

Likewise, policymakers need to be aware of actions they can take to increase the chance of school completion by girls. Policymakers can create an awareness of the particular problems surrounding female dropout and create incentives and sanctions to assure that local schools and districts address them.

Clearly, more research is necessary, and it should focus on how and why girls' patterns of school completion differ from boys'. We need research that documents the relationship between how girls experience schooling and the effects on their academic achievement and self-esteem.

Little research or evaluation has been directed at promising programs that help girls complete high school and improve their future chances for academic and economic success. Such programs have traditionally served pregnant and parenting teens, since girls often cite pregnancy or parenting as reasons for dropping out of school. Yet, the majority of female dropouts, 60 percent, leave school for other reasons. Schools and "outside" organizations use a variety of approaches to help such girls, employing different strategies to provide

- academic encouragement
- counseling to improve female self-esteem
- coordination of services to meet girls' academic and nonacademic needs
- bias-free interactions with teachers and administrators
- encouragement for girls to enter nontraditional courses and careers

In Part 2 of this book, there are ten specific recommendations for helping at-risk girls. Each is illustrated by describing programs using that approach. The programs originate from different sources: school personnel, school districts, private agencies and individuals, and state governments. Some have obtained enough funding to thoroughly document their success in helping girls complete school. Others lack the funds to expand or to undertake a formal evaluation; therefore, when forced to choose between program expansion or evaluation, program developers have chosen expansion. In the future, promising approaches need to be thoroughly evaluated and shared between states and communities.

There are a number of state policy initiatives that show promise in encouraging school retention. Descriptions of initiatives in six states—Wisconsin, Oregon, North Carolina, Maryland, Illinois, and Massachusetts—give an idea how policymakers can help at-risk youth of both sexes. Some important aspects of these programs are as follows:

- They require accurate data collection on school completion by gender
- They initiate collaboration between state agencies and private organizations in program planning and implementation
- They create incentives for schools to improve services
- They impose requirements that schools must meet in regard to at-risk youth
- They employ sanctions against districts or schools that fail to serve at-risk youth effectively

State governments and schools must work together to ensure that young men and women receive the academic and nonacademic services they need to complete school. It is important that governors and state legislators support at-risk initiatives, since the education community, by itself, cannot command the necessary resources or media attention. But schools must reach into the wider community and work cooperatively with other agencies and youth-serving organizations to provide aid—health, counseling, day care, mentoring, and employment training, to name a few—to students who will not finish school without support services. Schools will need to be more flexible and to rethink their structure to provide access to these services. To do less, just because it is difficult, is to withhold access to a better future from too many of our youth.

Part 1

Female Dropout: Causes and Consequences

Introduction

In October 1986, the National Association of State Boards of Education began to gather information on the issues, programs, and policies related to girls and dropout prevention. This book describes our findings.

When researchers identify characteristics that place students at risk or in danger of dropping out of school (characteristics such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and parental education level), few mention gender. Yet we found that being female puts students at risk in very specific ways. For example, although low achievement and low self-esteem are associated with dropout for both sexes, special factors hinder the academic accomplishments and confidence of girls.

Many problems that we thought had been resolved in the 1960s and 1970s—sex stereotyping in teachers' treatment of boys and girls, and in the selection of courses of study, for example—still exist. Many teachers' methods and attitudes favor boys' learning styles and the development of boys' self-confidence and are correspondingly less attentive to girls' needs in these areas. Because girls tend to be less assertive and less involved in serious disruptive behavior, their academic difficulties are often ignored. Influenced by sex-role stereotypes, girls choose not to enroll in certain courses—higher-level math and science, for example—in favor of fields for which they are not necessarily best suited. This may result in a lack of the prerequisite skills for a wide range of jobs. Further, because girls are often channeled into vocational training programs for jobs with lower pay, less prestige, and less opportunity for advancement, their chances for achieving economic self-sufficiency are reduced.

When the factors above are considered, girls having backgrounds that put them in a high-risk category for dropout (a background of poverty, for example) have especially formidable barriers to overcome. Further, the economic consequences for girls who drop out of school are serious. Half of all families headed by a female dropout live in poverty.

Education programmers and policymakers are increasingly concerned about the number of students who are not achieving a high school diploma. When we asked about programs or policies relating specifically to girls, we were told that "We have a program for pregnant teens." "We address that issue in our teen parent program." These programs are important, since many schools have ignored the needs of pregnant and parenting teens for too long. But the response was disturbing because 60 percent of girls who drop out of school do so for reasons unrelated to pregnancy. In addition, teen pregnancy may be symptomatic of already existing

problems, such as low self-esteem, poor academic achievement, and more generally, a lack of options.

Barring the highly visible problem of teen pregnancy, schools and education policymakers are not addressing the issues of how and why girls are especially at risk of not finishing high school. Girls themselves often understand little of their own motivations and the consequences of dropping out. We know what works in terms of effective dropout prevention programs for girls, indeed for *all* students. And what works is having adults (parents, teachers, counselors, community mentors, nurses, and so on) act as advocates for children, keeping track of their academic progress, their social relationships, and their health. We need a more personal, flexible school environment that encourages such attention. For young women at risk, this means actors in a school setting who are aware of the particular risk factors that effect young women, and who have time to address them.

What follows is an analysis of why girls are at risk, why they drop out of school, and what the consequences of dropping out are. We discuss the components of good programs and a series of policy options for local- and state-level personnel and policymakers. We hope that this information will be of assistance to those who make programmatic and policy decisions that affect our young people. Our goal is to reduce the risk of dropout for all—while highlighting the particular problems that school noncompletion creates for young women.

Overview

Here we discuss both dropouts and those students who are "at risk" of dropping out. "At risk" is a recent term describing students who are still in school, but are in danger of dropping out because they are alienated, performing poorly, or have other personal problems. The definition of an at-risk student is less precise than the definition of a dropout. Many school districts identify at-risk students as those who are one or more years behind their grade level on standardized tests. Others use clusters of demographic characteristics (low socioeconomic status, race, living in an urban area, etc.) to identify at-risk students. Missing from all definitions is the notion that being female may play a role.

The high school completion rate increased at every census from 1900 until 1965, when it reached 75 percent. Today the national completion rate remains at about 75 percent, having shown no improvement for over twenty years. In most urban districts, the noncompletion rate is over 50 percent. Current demographic trends indicate that future public school student bodies will increasingly consist of poor, minority students. In the next twenty years, therefore, public schools will consist of more "at-risk" students, and both their absolute numbers and degree of disadvantage will increase (Levin 1985; Hodgkinson 1985). Unless something is done to change this situation, many of these young people will become part of a growing number of people living below the poverty line. Not only will they be a massive drain on the economy through their increased dependence on welfare and unemployment assistance, but they are also far more likely than others to be in the juvenile justice and prison systems (Catterall 1985).

In his analysis of the High School and Beyond data, Barro (1984) found that males and females drop out of school at approximately the same rates. Further, males and females (who dropped out for reasons unrelated to pregnancy) gave similar reasons for dropping out. Thirty-six percent of males and 30 percent of females cited poor grades as a contributing factor. Thirty-five percent of males and 31 percent of females cited a "school was not for me" reason (Peng 1983). Yet reasons such as "school was not for me" or "poor grades," which both boys and girls report, do not describe how or why those attitudes were formed.

Although we do not discuss them, there are specific reasons why boys drop out. For example, males are twice as likely as females to report leaving high school because of behavior problems, including not getting along with teachers and being suspended or expelled. Males are also more likely to leave school because of economic-related issues, including having been offered a job or having to support

the family (Ekstrom et al. 1986). Just as for females, too little is known about the school factors that affect male dropout, and therefore, how programs can be tailored to help male dropouts.

As mentioned above, dropping out is most often associated with poverty, urban settings, families with parents who lack diplomas, and minority status. Schools can't directly affect these factors. Yet, any student with low academic achievement and low self-esteem is more likely to drop out (Ekstrom et al. 1986; Rumberger 1986; Wehlage and Rutter 1986). This is a problem that schools can address. If, as we found evidence to suppose, some aspects of schooling harm girls' self-esteem and academic achievement, dropout programs should include corrections for these inequities.

What Makes Girls At Risk?

- *Socialization. Girls are taught to be unassertive and to expect that a man will take financial care of them in the future.*
- *Cognitive Differences. The teaching structure of most classrooms reflects a bias toward the way boys learn, placing girls at a disadvantage.*
- *Teacher Interaction. Teachers' responses to students favor male academic development, confidence, and independence.*
- *Curricular Choices. Girls limit their potential by the courses they select. They also choose vocational training for traditionally female jobs with lower pay and prestige.*

Socialization

Fifty-four percent of women over sixteen years old are now in the work force ("Women in the American Economy" 1987*). Furthermore, 59 percent of the children born in 1983 will live with only one parent before reaching the age of eighteen (Hodgkinson 1985). Thus, at least half of all girls live in a home environment that illustrates the kind of life they can expect to lead. Despite this fact, many girls are still socialized to think that they can safely expect to spend the rest of their lives married and bringing up children while someone else takes financial care of them (Verheyden-Hilliard 1978).

Many young women are taught to be polite, cooperative, and unassertive. Adults teach girls to passively accept affection and to limit early play and exploration to "girls'" activities. As girls mature, they define their role by forming bonds with others and by learning through cooperation (Smulyan 1986). In contrast, adults urge boys to be assertive and to explore their environment; in general, normal rowdiness is tolerated and even encouraged as typical "boy" behavior. As girls define their roles through forming personal bonds and being cooperative, boys define their roles through competitive behavior that separates them from their peers (Smulyan 1986). Boys, in general, develop more assertive personalities.

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*Hereinafter, this source will be referred to as "'Women' 1987."

Stereotypical male and female roles stressed during childhood gain new importance during adolescence, when both sexes begin to form the values and interests that will define their identities as adults. Many adolescents cling to rigid sex stereotypes as a way to cope with the pressure of this process of self-identification (Mokros 1984). At a time in a young woman's life when she must make decisions affecting her career and earning power, she is often strongly motivated by the pressure to excel in personal skills that do not include academic and career planning. Thus, societal biases place a female at risk of limiting her options.

Cognitive Differences

Not only are girls "preprogrammed" to excel in areas other than academics, but schools cater to the cognitive orientation of (white) males. Gender differences in cognitive orientation are a well-documented fact (Erikson 1968; Haas 1979; Gilligan 1982; Smulyan 1986). In general, girls learn through cooperating with others, acknowledging each other's ideas, and building upon them to find common meanings (Smulyan 1986). In contrast, boys are more competitive, work to contribute their ideas independently of one another, and define themselves through differences from their peers (Smulyan 1986). These two patterns of learning reflect lifelong differences in attitudes between men and women (Gilligan 1982). The concept of cognitive differences should not be seen as a set of rigid standards defining every boy's or girl's learning style, but as a general, measurable tendency that applies to individual boys and girls to a greater or lesser extent.

Unfortunately, these differences may influence students' academic performances because of the way middle, junior high, and high school classes are structured (Smulyan 1986). Most secondary teachers rely on a lecture format that elicits individual student responses rather than encouraging cooperative group efforts. For boys, this model reinforces their method of learning, but it conflicts with a girl's tendency to collaborate, make connections, and build relationships in problem solving (Smulyan 1986). The structure of classroom instruction can place girls at a disadvantage.

Teacher Interaction

Teachers' responses to students have also been found to favor male academic development and independence. Sadker and Sadker (1981) found that "girls are more likely to be invisible members of the classroom. Teachers talk to them less, provide them with fewer directions, counsel them less, and give them fewer rewards." Yet students who receive teacher attention are more likely to succeed academically. Teachers are more likely to show boys how to complete tasks for themselves (encouraging their proficiency and independence) and are correspond-

ingly more likely to complete a task for a girl (encouraging lack of skill and confidence). In sex-segregated classrooms, teachers spend more time in the "boys'" section. Gifted girls are less likely to be identified or to participate in accelerated classes than gifted boys. In essence, girls and boys are experiencing different academic environments. Teachers are generally unaware of the presence or impact of their bias, though brief but focused teacher training can reduce or eliminate sex bias from classroom interaction (Sadker and Sadker 1986).

Dweck et al. (1980) discovered sex differences in the kind of praise teachers give. In general, boys were praised for the substance of their performance in the classroom, but criticized for matters of form, e.g., sloppy handwriting or calling out answers in class. In contrast, girls were praised for matters of form, e.g., neat handwriting or speaking clearly, but were criticized on the substance of their unacceptable performance. Encouraged by teacher praise, boys attributed their success to the substance of their innate abilities and generally dismissed criticism on matters of form as unimportant. Girls, however, were unimpressed by teachers' praise of their form, but were very discouraged by criticism of their unacceptable performance. Girls therefore tended to attribute failure to their own lack of ability and were less likely to develop positive self-concepts and expectations for achievement. As boys shrugged off criticism (of sloppy handwriting, for example), girls took the failure of their performances to heart (Brophy 1981).

As solutions to the problem above, Dweck et al. (1980) suggested that teachers help students to evaluate and praise themselves (rather than relying solely on the teachers' comments), and that teachers write specific, informative praise statements on students' written work. Clearly, it is essential that attention be paid to ways classroom interaction discourages the development of girls' skills and self-confidence.

Curricular Choices

Girls are not sufficiently encouraged to take traditionally "male" math, science, and computer courses. In fact, both female and minority students who are interested in science and engineering are not only ignored, but more often dissuaded from their interests. Although 92 percent of all females take one year of mathematics, only 28 percent take three years of mathematics (compared to 40 percent of males). Similarly, while 89 percent of females take at least one science course, only 19 percent take three years of science in high school (compared to 27 percent of males). Hence, not only are four out of five female high school seniors already precluded from taking college math, science, or engineering courses, but they are also unable to train for a number of jobs, both traditional and nontraditional (Malcolm et al. 1984). Although the scores on the math section of the SAT test are 47 points lower for women than men (PEER 1986), boys and girls are not born with innate differences in their ability. In fact, students tested at nine and twelve years old show

few performance differences by gender, except for the fact that females outperform males on exercises measuring knowledge (Malcolm et al. 1984).

Despite laws such as Title IX (1972) and federal funding programs, such as the Women's Educational Equity Act (1974), women of all racial and ethnic groups remain seriously underrepresented in vocational training programs leading to higher paying jobs (PEER 1986). In New York State's five largest cities, young women account for only 6.8 percent of the students enrolled in traditionally male vocational programs. Alternatively, females comprise more than 90 percent of the enrollment in such stereotypic occupations as "medical assistant," "stenography/secretarial," "LP/nursing," and "cosmetology" (Schulzinger and Syron n.d.). Traditionally female, these fields offer notoriously low wages when compared to traditionally male fields requiring comparable training. When young women are channeled into jobs that offer low pay and little opportunity for advancement, the chances of them achieving economic self-sufficiency are reduced. In 1984, the median income of women was $6,868, compared with $15,600 for men ("Women" 1987). This inequity directly contributes to the poverty experienced by so many single women with young children.

Women of all racial and ethnic groups are greatly underrepresented among the ranks of scientists and engineers in the United States. This underrepresentation is a reflection of the quality and quantity of their precollege education (Malcolm et al. 1984). In addition, girls pursuing stereotypically female occupations may be wasting many natural talents better suited to traditionally male occupations. The frustrations accompanying these occupational "mismatches" can be considerable.

Which Girls Drop Out?

- *Background Characteristics. Female dropout rates are more sensitive than male's to variations in socioeconomic status and to the number of their siblings. Black and Hispanic females are more likely to drop out of school due to socioeconomic factors than white females.*

- *Pregnancy, Parenting, and Dropping Out. Teen pregnancy is increasingly being viewed as an indication of low self-esteem, low basic skills, and a general lack of life options. In this sense, the pregnancy itself is not the essential problem.*

Background Characteristics

A number of background characteristics correlate with dropping out of school. Low socioeconomic status is a factor; in general, students from households with low-income, low-skill wage earners and limited educational backgrounds are about three times as likely to drop out of school as students from the highest end of the socioeconomic scale (SES)—22 percent versus 7 percent (United States General Accounting Office 1986). Yet, a parent's socioeconomic level affects the dropout rate of girls more than boys. Females from families in the lowest SES quartile are nearly five times as likely to drop out as females from the highest quartile. Males from the lowest quartile are only two and one-half times more likely to drop out than males from the top quartile. The relationship between dropping out and parents' education level is a strong one. For young women, a mother's education level is particularly significant. The more schooling a mother has completed, the less likely her daughter is to drop out (Rumberger 1983).

Dropout rates generally increase as the number of siblings increase, with the pattern being strongest for white males and females (Barro 1984). Larger families tend to have lower socioeconomic status, a factor clearly related to higher dropout rates. However, the number of siblings is a particularly critical factor for young women, as they may drop out of school in order to care for brothers and sisters at home. The dropout rate accelerates faster for young women having three to five siblings (11.2 percent to 20 percent) than for young men with the same number of siblings (14.7 percent to 17.6 percent) (Barro 1984).

Other characteristics affecting dropout are race and ethnicity. While the gap between Black and white dropout rates has narrowed in recent years, dropout rates

for both male and female Hispanic students have been slower to improve (U.S. Department of Commerce 1986). Certain geographical factors are also associated with high dropout rates. Some estimates put completion rates for inner city youngsters as low as 50 percent (Fine 1986; Ekstrom et al. 1986).

Pregnancy, Parenting, and Dropping Out

For the approximately 40 percent of females who drop out of school for reasons related to pregnancy and marriage ("Schools Must Ease" 1984), their dilemma can be symptomatic of low self-esteem, low academic achievement, and a lack of life options in general. Consider the following:

- Teens with poor basic skills are five times as likely to become mothers before age sixteen as are those with average basic skills.
- Young women with poor or fair basic skills are four times as likely as those with average basic skills to have more than one child in their teens. (Children's Defense Fund 1986)

Given these statistics, it is likely that pregnancy is an escape mechanism for some young women to leave an environment typified by failure and frustration. Age at first marriage has no significant effect on the educational attainment of men, but has a strong effect on the educational attainment of women (Marini 1978).

Many organizations (Children's Defense Fund, Center for Population Options, etc.) that have studied and developed programs for pregnant and parenting teens view teen pregnancy as the result of the lack of sufficient life options. Increasing life options means increasing "basic skills, knowledge, and self-esteem, exposure to a variety of adult roles and role models, and basic opportunities for education, community participation, and employment" (Children's Defense Fund 1986). This theory proposes that in order for a teen to successfully delay pregnancy, she must see opportunities in her future—education, employment, and a career—worth planning and preparing for. Without the incentive of a promising future, many girls who are experiencing frustration and failure at school view parenthood as a chance to excel in an area remote from academics (Children's Defense Fund 1986).

School Structure and Dropout

- *School Structure and At-Risk Youth. As currently structured, schools do not work well for at-risk students.*

- *School Structure and Girls. Many pregnant and parenting girls don't have adequate support systems outside of school; therefore, schools must provide more than the education "basics."*

School Structure and At-Risk Youth

Comprehensive high schools are designed to treat all students in a similar way. Typically, all students move through a set number of periods each day. Batches of students are processed through an academic program at the same rate. For high-risk students, this structure may not be effective (Natriello 1986; Wehlage and Rutter 1986). High-risk students are better served with programs where they can test their knowledge and skills in a real world setting. Many of these students require a nontraditional method of teaching and learning: for example, programs that provide an experiential component or self-paced, competency-based, individualized instruction. The ability of schools to attract and retain at-risk students needs to be a part of our definition of excellence.

The following two assumptions presently guide high school organization:

1. Schools are bureaucracies whose major function is to process students. Students are treated as if they have uniform needs in the areas of academic performance, learning, and social behavior.
2. Schools serve students most effectively by focusing on a limited range of activities, i.e., academic or basic skills, leaving students' personal needs to be addressed by others. (Natriello 1986)

The first assumption establishes the grading and class system in schools. Thus, all six-year-old students enter the first grade and master a certain set of skills based on a uniform teaching style, usually lecture and seatwork. At age seven, all students enter second grade and repeat the first grade process with the same teaching methods, but acquiring a different set of skills. This pattern continues until students either graduate or, in the case of some at-risk students, become so discouraged with the system that they drop out.

The second assumption implies that although students need to learn more than "reading, writing, and arithmetic," they will learn these other things outside of school. This idea assumes that a collaborative support structure exists between home, church, and other community organizations to fill the gaps. Unfortunately, this assumption works for only a limited set of the student population.

School Structure and Girls

For many girls, the assumptions described above are particularly erroneous. First, as stated earlier, many females have different learning styles and social motivation than males. Second, many young women living in poverty do not enjoy the out-of-school resources that most middle-class children enjoy. In fact, young women burdened by the care of siblings or infants may not even enjoy the out-of-school opportunities for employment and extracurricular activities that their male equals have. Further, many extracurricular activities, especially at the high school level, feature girls playing supportive roles to male-centered events, such as cheerleading for football games.

Young women who are pregnant or parenting have particular difficulties with the current school structure. Faced with the standard six or seven period day, pregnant teens experiencing physical discomfort may find it impossible to attend the number of classes needed to pass a course, or they may have to drop out of school for a semester. Once they have left school, teens are out of sequence with their class. At that point, the teen has two choices: (1) either take extra courses at night or in the summer to catch up with her class, or (2) face the social humiliation of joining a younger class (to be "left back" or retained). If the young woman is "left back," she will, in many cases, eventually drop out of school. Scheduling and attendance problems continue after the mother has delivered. During school hours, she must often schedule doctor's appointments, cope with child care, etc., pushing her further behind in classwork.

Pregnant and parenting teens also have a greater need for instruction in areas outside of the academic "basics," for example, information about prenatal and infant care, access to social services, day care, and family life education. This need conflicts with the assumption that schools need only teach the basics. Schools can play critical roles in retaining pregnant and parenting teens. Schools that actively counsel pregnant and parenting students show increased retention rates for this population (Polit and Kahn 1986). To date, however, schools have tended to play a relatively passive role and generally become involved in establishing special programs for pregnant and parenting teens as a result of some external pressure (Polit and Kahn 1986).

Recent School Reform and Dropout

Since 1980, unprecedented activity at the state level has addressed revision of standards for high school graduation. According to Pipho (1986), forty-five states and the District of Columbia have altered their reporting requirements for earning a high school diploma. While most would agree that secondary school standards were in need of revision, others caution that raising standards may drive increasing numbers of already-marginal students out of school. For example, states have defined higher standards in two ways: (1) by increasing the number of courses required for graduation and by specifying them and (2) by requiring exit examinations of students to determine whether they possess basic skills at a minimum level. Few states concentrated on the at-risk population when enacting the reforms, and specific attention to dropout prevention was not explicit in the education reforms of the early 1980s (Goodwin and Muraskin 1985; MDC 1985).

Although it is too soon to assess the effects of these reforms on potential female dropouts, preliminary evidence suggests the following:

1. It is likely that at-risk students will find it more difficult to complete their education because of the increased credit requirements in traditional academic subjects. (McDill et al. 1986; Goodwin and Muraskin 1985; Rumberger 1986)
2. With decreasing federal support for education, most states and local districts have responded to the resulting fiscal and political pressures by concentrating on curriculum basics and cutting back on such priorities as sex equity coordinator positions, which concentrate on the school-related factors that place girls at risk. (National Coalition of Advocates for Students 1985)

Costs of Dropping Out

- *Academic Consequences. Evidence suggests that females, especially urban, minority females, suffer more serious academic consequences when they drop out. After dropping out they are less likely to return to complete their education.*

- *Economic Consequences. Evidence suggests that girls suffer more serious economic consequences when they drop out.*

Academic Consequences of Dropping Out

Many dropouts, but especially females, have a high academic potential (Poole and Low 1982). Yet, in an analysis of the High School and Beyond data, Ekstrom et al. (1986) pointed out that females are bigger losers when they drop out of school. Females (and Blacks) fall furthest behind in the language development areas of vocabulary, reading, and writing when they leave school early. Because females take fewer science and mathematics courses than males, there is less difference in these areas between female graduates and dropouts. However, as stated earlier, this fact does affect potential career choices.

Having dropped out, how many students complete their education through alternatives such as the general equivalency diploma (GED) degree? A recent study indicated that 38 percent of dropouts returned and completed a GED by the time their classmates were two years out of high school. Two factors were particularly associated with returning and completing. First, students who left school at earlier ages were less likely to return. Second, although young white men and women were equally likely to return and complete their degree, Hispanic and Black males were about 10 percentage points more likely to return and complete high school than young Hispanic and Black females (Kolstad and Owings 1986). Further, in urban areas, young males are more likely to return and complete their education than young females (43 percent compared to 25 percent). When these factors are added to the fact that minority status and the urban setting are highly associated with dropping out, the academic consequences for urban, minority young women are particularly severe.

Economic Consequences of Dropping Out

Girls who drop out of high school face a bleak future. Nearly all jobs demand basic skills that are seldom possessed by dropouts. In fact, the high school diploma itself is a significant credential. While it may not open all doors to economic opportunity, the lack of that diploma will close doors to jobs, to the military, to many industry training programs, and to much of the postsecondary education system.

Young women face severe economic penalties for dropping out of school. The occupational advantages for a female with a high school diploma are considerable: 61 percent of female graduates hold white collar positions versus 25 percent of female dropouts; 51 percent of female dropouts hold service positions versus 20 percent of female graduates. Further, a high school diploma "buys" more for females than it does for males, in the sense that female graduates will earn more in relation to female dropouts than male graduates will earn in relation to male dropouts. And most strikingly, though women in general earn 64 percent of what men earn, female dropouts earn just 29 percent of what male graduates earn ("Women" 1987; Fine and Rosenberg 1983). Young women face a lifetime of economic consequences when they fail to complete high school.

The single most salient indicant of poverty is a young minority mother who is a single parent. Forty-nine percent of families headed by female dropouts live in poverty (Fine and Rosenberg 1983). In 1974, children became the poorest segment of society, displacing the aged. In 1984, nearly one-fourth of all children under seventeen lived in poverty. Most of these children are white, but a disproportionate number of them are Black and Hispanic (Hodgkinson 1985). Pregnancy is the most common reason why young women drop out. Single parenthood and lack of adequate, affordable child care are most often cited by young women as reasons why they don't return to school after giving birth.

Policies Related to Girls At Risk

Policy development aimed at at-risk youth is a new concept. As we mentioned earlier, the at-risk population figured little in the excellence reforms sweeping the country in the early 1980s. In their analysis of the reform initiatives in thirty-two states, MDC found that only fifteen paid attention to the needs of at-risk youth, and that many of those states paid only cursory attention to the problem (MDC 1985). Federal policy development in this area has declined steadily since the 1970s. When this is coupled with the fact that the federal government, in general, has reduced its education presence, it is all the more critical that state and local school districts take significant action.

State and Local Policies

Policy development in state and local school districts follows the same theme. Since policy initiatives for at-risk youth are a recent phenomenon, it is too early to assess the effectiveness of policies already in place. Nowhere, however, did we find policies that identified girls as particularly at risk, unless they were pregnant or parenting. Therefore, what follows is a general discussion of policy issues and specific policy mechanisms emphasizing how they *could* be used to examine issues related to high-risk young women and dropping out.

Policy Issues

Policymakers will want to consider the following issues as they explore various programs designed to help at-risk students, and high-risk female students in particular.

1. *What is the extent of the problem?* States, local school districts, and individual schools need to document the number of at-risk students and the number of student dropouts. This data is not currently available in a significant number of states, and the accuracy of statistics at local and school levels varies. This information should be comparably collected and analyzed by sex in order to understand the dimensions of female dropout.
2. *At which grades should dropout effort be concentrated?* Programs tend to concentrate at the levels of early childhood and high school. There are compelling reasons to intervene early. According to recent Head Start data,

students enrolled in comprehensive, high-quality preschool programs have fewer grade retentions, fewer special education referrals, and higher high school graduation rates. Likewise, high schools must pursue dropout prevention programs to catch students before they leave the education system. There has been little effort directed at the middle school level, which is when girls' achievement rates begin to suffer. Particular attention should be paid to at-risk girls in middle schools.

3. *How can teachers be better prepared to help at-risk students?* Because teachers interact differently with boys and girls, a two-pronged approach is desirable. First, most teachers have little preparation or training for working with at-risk populations. They need to know the best instructional strategies for these students, and they must have the appropriate resources. Teachers also need information about available community resources, since dropout-prone students may require multiple services (e.g., health, employment, and social services). Second, teachers need information about how girls may be particularly at risk. Teacher training to monitor teachers' expectations and interactions will help ensure that girls aren't penalized for female socialization patterns and cognitive styles.
4. *How can services at the state and local levels be more effectively coordinated?* As high-risk students often have multiple needs, both states and local school districts must coordinate program delivery more effectively. This is particularly critical for pregnant and parenting girls. Although schools do not need to *provide* all available services, they should be at the center of a *referral* process. Pregnant and parenting teens are less likely to drop out if someone at the school provides them with access to health and social services, employment services, day care, and the like.
5. *How can parents of at-risk students be encouraged to become involved in their children's education?* Parental involvement and support of the school can be critical to student achievement, particularly for low-income, low-achieving students. Schools need to find creative methods for contacting "hard to reach" parents, such as single parents, low-income and minority parents, and parents who work full-time.
6. *Should schools tailor dropout prevention programs to students' own sets of circumstances?* Dropout prevention programs need to be tailored to the students in individual schools. Therefore, unilateral federal or state guidelines make no sense in the area of dropout prevention. This means that states and local school districts will relinquish some decision-making power about the number of rules and regulations currently applied to schools. At the same time, governing authorities must ensure that schools make satisfactory progress; they must be prepared to intercede when such progress is clearly not occurring. Again, when defining goals and progress, policies should consider the factor of gender.

7. *How can resources be more effectively allocated to serve at-risk students?* At-risk students are more expensive to educate; yet, per pupil expenditure is often lowest in precisely those districts that serve large numbers of at-risk students, that is, large urban and small rural districts.

Policy Mechanisms

We have identified some of the policy issues that state and local school districts consider when deciding about a guiding philosophy for their programs. Below are a few particular policy mechanisms for meeting identified goals. States and local school districts can do the following:

1. Focus attention on at-risk youth by
   - requiring accurate data on school completion and releasing information on the nature and extent of the problem in school districts and individual schools.
   - developing legislative agendas for at-risk youth and promoting them to legislative bodies.
   - making "at-risk youth" agenda items for their policy review cycles.
2. Create incentives for better serving at-risk populations by
   - recognizing outstanding school districts and school achievements by publicizing their success and awarding them certificates of merit.
   - providing technical assistance for sharing successful ideas with school districts and schools.
   - providing additional programs and funds so districts and schools can address the problem.
   - providing successful school districts and schools with greater flexibility, e.g., release them from certain state requirements and regulations if they have clearly met state approved goals regarding high-risk youth.
3. Impose additional requirements by
   - requiring reduced student-teacher ratios for students who are chronically truant or are more than one year behind grade level.
   - providing alternative teaching methods, e.g., individualized, competency-based instruction, when students are more than one year behind grade level.
   - requiring that schools provide students with access to a variety of services addressing students' emotional, health, social, and employment needs.
4. Employ sanctions against districts or schools that fail to serve at-risk youth effectively by
   - requiring those school districts and schools with dropout rates exceeding state or district maximums or those having unacceptably low student achievement levels to submit plans for approval. Such plans would include specific steps for correcting the situation, with the state providing incentives for achievement of the plan.

- putting districts or schools on notice, and sending teams to the district to diagnose the school's failure to attain student retention and achievement objectives, when progress has not been demonstrated within a given period of time.
- withholding state accreditation and/or having the state assume the authority of the local school board in those districts where the local board fails to comply with state standards.

Counting Dropouts and Students At Risk

It is impossible to discuss the issues related to high school completion without referring to discrepancies in the current database. While the definition of a dropout causes no particular problem (a dropout is someone who leaves school before completion), technical problems exist because different localities and states compile information differently. Some states compute dropout rates for grades seven through twelve, while others compute rates for grades nine through twelve. Also, there is no standard length of time between a pupil's initial absence and the declaration of a dropout status. Is a dropout a student who stays out of school for a month? for a year? who enters a GED program? (Catterall 1985).

It is important for school districts, states, and the federal government to collect accurate, comparable information on dropouts. We know dropouts are not randomly distributed across the population, but are concentrated among poor, minority, urban youth. Accurate dropout data helps policymakers address issues of access and equity in public education. In addition, we need to know how and why girls' patterns of school participation differs from boys'.

Conclusion

This section has given an overview of the specific factors that place young women at risk of dropping out of school. Young women are at risk because of their early socialization, cognitive differences, treatment by teachers, and curricular choices. These factors affect both their self-esteem and academic achievement. Because schools, particularly high schools, are rigidly structured, the problems faced by at-risk young women are often unaddressed.

We have outlined the essential considerations for programmers who struggle to identify the best ways to prevent female dropout. Finally, we have discussed policy issues and strategies in an attempt to provide assistance to local and state policymakers, so that the policy development process will be informed by the best research and understanding. We know enough to be able to act. We can no longer afford to wait.

Part 2

New Approaches to Dropout Prevention for Girls

Introduction

This section continues the discussion on at-risk females and offers promising approaches to helping them stay in school. Part 1 described the particular causes and consequences of female dropout. What follows are recommendations for state and local action to address the problem. This part is divided into five chapters: (1) the introduction, (2) programs, (3) recommendations (4) state policies and initiatives, and (5) the conclusion.

Girls At Risk

Every student should receive, at minimum, a high school education; this is a societal goal. Approximately 25 percent of secondary students drop out of school; thus, we have not accomplished this goal. In some large urban and rural districts, the dropout rate exceeds 50 percent. High school dropouts are not randomly dispersed throughout the population; they are disproportionately poor, minority, and urban. Girls who have backgrounds that put them in one of these high-risk categories for dropout have especially formidable barriers to overcome. They face more serious academic and economic consequences ("Women" 1987; Fine and Roseberg 1983; Ekstrom et al. 1986). Of the girls who drop out of school, few will return and complete their high school education; more than half will end up in service jobs, and 49 percent of female dropouts who head families will live in poverty.

Many people equate female dropout with pregnancy, early parenthood, and marriage, though only about 40 percent of girls leave school for these reasons. Still, pregnancy and parenting is the single most common reason given by girls who drop out, and most programs for at-risk girls address this population. These programs are important, since these students have been ignored too long. Many parenting girls leave school for the simple reason that they can't find affordable child care.

The majority of girls (60 percent) drop out of school giving such reasons as "poor grades" or "school was not for me." Little research has been devoted to the evolution of these attitudes and problems, though evidence suggests that some aspects of schooling harm girls' self-esteem and independence (see Part 1). The result is lowered academic and economic success. And any student with low self-esteem and low academic achievement is more likely to drop out of school (Ekstrom et al. 1986; Rumberger 1986; Wehlage and Rutter 1986).

Schools cannot directly affect factors such as poverty and the urban setting that are correlated with male and female dropout. But schools can—and must—correct educational inequities associated with gender.

Role of Schools

Implementing new approaches will require schools to act upon the mission of universal public secondary education. Ideas about the appropriate mission of secondary schools have evolved as student populations have changed. In the 1980s, we are asking schools to socialize students, prepare them for citizenship in a democratic society, and equip them for postsecondary schooling and employment. In addition, we expect schools to carry out a social agenda: provide equal opportunity through desegregation, assimilate immigrants, and compensate for the disadvantages students bring to school. Many students experience serious problems in the transition from elementary to secondary education. It is here that students increasingly fall behind academically and exhibit attitudes and behaviors that eventually lead to dropping out. For this reason, this report concentrates on programs and policies aimed at students in grades seven through twelve.

In recent years, an increasing percentage of students belong to minority groups and are disadvantaged. Many come to school with problems that include illiterate parents, poor health, a lack of proficiency in the English language, troubled or broken homes, a history of abuse, and poverty. In addition, some of these students enter school with the added disadvantage of being victims of cultural stereotyping. Children with such disadvantages are often described as being "at-risk" of failing to complete high school. They often need an intensive, personal approach to resolve the academic, economic, and personal problems that interfere with their opportunity for school success.

The need to help at-risk students will change the way many schools function. Large student bodies and class sizes foster an impersonal environment; teachers and counselors often don't have the time to consider the personal problems students face, and some feel that it is not their job to do so. Yet, despite the complexity of the problem, schools and outside organizations are developing promising approaches for encouraging the success of high-risk students; some of these will be described in this section.

Need for Partnerships between Schools and Outside Organizations

Schools can not and should not have to provide all the programs and services needed by at-risk females and males. Instead, they can work in partnership with other organizations such as health departments, social services agencies, employment and training institutions, and nonprofit community-based organizations to obtain support for students either at the school site or through referrals. Such organizations are valuable resources to schools, as the following program descriptions will demonstrate.

Promising Approaches

Pregnancy has been the focus for the identification of at-risk girls and dropout prevention programs, though most young women drop out for other reasons. Most educators' attempts to keep girls (who are not pregnant) in school have employed the same strategies used to keep boys in school. Hence, although there are many dropout prevention programs, there are few developed specifically for the majority of female dropouts. An examination of promising programs for girls also involves an examination of promising dropout prevention programs in general.

Characteristics of Successful Programs

When considering the components of a successful dropout program for girls, it is necessary to describe the characteristics of successful dropout programs in general. Successful programs are idiosyncratic in the sense that their accomplishments depend upon the specific personnel involved, as well as the environmental and socioeconomic characteristics of the region in which the program is provided. Still, there are a number of components that should be considered in designing an effective program.

First, program providers must determine which factors are causing students to drop out, as well as being sensitive to the differing characteristics of female and male noncompleters. Because of the variety of factors to be considered in each situation, no single program will work for all students. Generally, comprehensive, multifaceted programs have been the most successful in helping a variety of youths who are at-risk for various reasons (Cipollone 1986).

Successful programs involve local input at all phases of planning and implementation. The state's role includes helping to facilitate and encourage good programs and removing the barriers that impede their development. Effective programs involve collaboration and coordination among government agencies, community organizations, the home, and the business community (Mizell 1986; Cipollone 1986; Levin 1985).

Finally, successful programs have clearly defined goals with a "vision of success" for students. Students and teachers display a commitment to these programs, taking advantage of the opportunity for adults and students to develop meaningful relationships (Cipollone 1986).

Types of Dropout Programs

Several classification systems describe dropout programs already in existence. Michael Bailin, in the State Youth Initiatives Project (Levin 1985), describes dropout initiatives as either institutional, programmatic, or instructional. Institutional programs link organizations outside of the school to education, and these organizations may assume the entire responsibility for educating at-risk students. Programmatic strategies are employed within the school, but vary a student's program of studies. Instructional strategies operate within the school with standard materials, but employ alternative teaching methods.

Other researchers have grouped program types by the salient characteristics placing students at risk. Thus, programs would be grouped according to the following major categories (Florida Department of Education 1986):

- *Educational Alternative Programs.* Designed for students who are unmotivated or unsuccessful in traditional instructional systems; particularly beneficial for young women, since standard education methods often are incompatible with their method of cognitive processing and socializing. Participants earn either a high school diploma or its equivalent. Programs include alternative schools, alternative classes, and outside settings for nontraditional education.
- *Teen Parents.* Designed for pregnant or parenting teens. Although recent efforts have emphasized the need to include the father, such programs represent the only current dropout prevention alternatives that specifically address the needs of young women. Programs can provide separate education for pregnant teens, special classes within the regular school schedule, and homebound instruction.
- *Substance Abuse.* Designed for students at risk because of drug- or alcohol-related problems. Programs can provide counseling, education, and access to services that are either school-based or agency-based.
- *Disciplinary Alternatives.* Designed for students at risk of dropout or expulsion because of their chronic disruptive behavior at school. Programs include alternative instruction at school or at separate centers, often with behavior modification components.
- *Youth Services.* Designed for students who are receiving other youth and rehabilitation services. Such youths include students in criminal detention or rehabilitation, runaways, youths who are wards of the court because of abuse and neglect, or students receiving treatment in drug- and alcohol-abuse programs. These services may be provided in school, out of school, or in experimental programs, in businesses or in the wilderness, for example.
- *Community-based Programs.* Designed to provide services and training to at-risk youth to help them adapt to and cope with the standard school environment. Programs include leadership clubs, community recreational centers, and resource and mentor programs.

The classification systems described above are helpful. Separate programs targeted at girls are not always necessary; rather, special attention needs to be paid to at-risk girls, and indeed, to any student at risk for any reason.

Below are some of the promising strategies that school and nonschool organizations are using to help girls complete school. There is no widespread, systematic, long-term evaluation of successful approaches to preventing female dropout. Most programs are relatively new and many lack the funds for formal evaluation. We identified programs by contacting state boards of education, state departments of education, experts in dropout prevention, and individuals who are implementing programs. The programs listed below were selected to provide a range of options and to illustrate ideas in action.

We have identified the following factors as most likely to result in school retention gains for young women.

1. *Academic Encouragement.* The achievement of academic success is important not only for the obvious reason of acquiring knowledge, but because poor academic performance often results in feelings of frustration and failure, poor self-esteem, and the possibility of dropout. Girls with poor basic skills are five times more likely to become mothers before age sixteen than those with average basic skills (Children's Defense Fund 1986). And, girls who drop out face disturbing economic consequences: the average income of female dropouts is only 29 percent that of male graduates ("Women" 1987; Fine and Rosenberg 1983).

   It is essential, then, for schools to pay particular attention to encouraging the academic success of young women who are at risk of dropping out. We will examine two general methods for accomplishing this goal: (1) instructional strategies that encourage cooperative learning and (2) remedial strategies for girls who are already in academic trouble.
2. *Activities to Enhance Self-Esteem.* Building the self-esteem of at-risk youth has long been recognized as an essential component in the effort to reduce dropout rates. But it is especially important to recognize the different needs of girls and boys in this regard. Young women must be able to transcend stereotypical roles as they form their identities and make life plans. For this reason, we will describe programs that provide nontraditional role models, counseling, and access to extracurricular activities.
3. *Coordination of Services for Academic and Nonacademic Needs.* Students at risk of dropping out have a wide range of problems making it difficult for any single school, school structure, or service program to deal effectively with them. Schools must process large numbers of students, and to do this most effectively they tend to limit their scope to general academics and the development of basic skills. Schools assume that other needs, such as social skills and personal development, will be at least partially covered by outside agencies

(the church, the home, or other community organizations). High-risk students, who need these support structures the most, are often the ones who remain separated from these "outside" services. This is particularly true of at-risk girls, who might be dealing with some (or all) of such varied difficulties as pregnancy and parenting, substance abuse, physical or sexual abuse at home, neglect, poverty, support of younger siblings, low grades, poor academic skills, and poor self-esteem. To help these students, schools must coordinate access to a broad spectrum of services and programs. Schools must also be flexible enough to allow students to use outside services.

4. *Bias-free Interactions with Teachers and Administrators.* Despite progress made in the 1960s and 1970s toward the creation of classrooms free from gender and ethnic stereotyping, many problems remain. Teachers still show biases as they interact with students, organize their classroom, structure learning groups, discipline and evaluate students, and, in general, give more attention to boys than girls (though it is known that amount of attention is directly correlated to achievement). Problems remain, partially because they are subtle; teachers often don't recognize their own biases. However, research indicates that this differential treatment can be changed. After a three-year study of gender disparities in teacher to student interactions, Sadker and Sadker (1981) reported that "when teachers become aware of differences in the way they interact with male and female students and when they receive appropriate resources and training, they can become more equitable in their response patterns." Equality in the classroom is important for at-risk girls and ethnic groups, as well as all low-income and low-achieving students.
5. *Encouragement to Enroll in Nontraditional Courses and to Enter Nontraditional Careers.* Despite gains in recent years, America's work force of scientists and engineers is still less than 5 percent female. Even worse, high school girls are still finding themselves channeled into such traditionally female and comparatively low-paying vocational programs as secretarial help, medical assistance, nursing, or cosmetology. While girls and boys in elementary school show equal ability in math, boys outperform girls in high school. Though the reasons behind this disparity are often subtle, they are pervasive, and certain patterns in schools emerge. For instance, girls in math classes are often treated differently. Teachers initiate more contacts with boys than with girls. Boys are told to "try harder," which assumes their ability, while girls are told, "Well, at least you tried" (Campbell 1986). There is still a general feeling at school and in many homes that math and science are "male" classes—attitudes that erode female self-confidence even before sex differences show up in test scores.

   Girls still lack many of the necessary role models to encourage them to pursue careers in nontraditional fields. Mentoring and career awareness are closely tied. It is necessary then, for schools to encourage everyone to be

involved with mathematics and science, to analyze their courses and classroom techniques with a view toward equal treatment, and to emphasize the links between math and careers. Many of the problems mentioned above, and the techniques for correcting them, are generally applicable to low-income and minority groups.

Recommendations for Action

In this chapter we make ten recommendations for providing the services previously described and descriptions of programs using that approach. The programs work in different ways—some result from school district initiatives, others from the state, while others were developed by organizations outside the school that help young women as part of their mission. The efforts of all these institutions and individuals are valuable. Female dropout is a complex problem requiring a multitude of solutions.

The programs that we describe serve secondary school students because the transition from elementary to middle school is a time when students most often manifest symptoms of problems—pregnancy, substance abuse, and truancy, for example—that lead to dropout. This does not preclude the need to identify and assist at-risk children at an earlier age. Local districts and states need to establish comprehensive programs that identify at-risk students early and monitor their progress throughout the educational system.

Finally, the placement of programs into the following categories of "Recommendations" is sometimes arbitrary. Many programs are multidimensional and feature a variety of services; they fit under more than one category.

Academic Encouragement

RECOMMENDATION 1: Instructional strategies should incorporate the group activities and collaboration that complement female cognitive development.

Gender differences in cognitive orientation are well documented; girls tend to learn through cooperative efforts, while boys tend to learn through competitive efforts. The lecture format caters to the learning patterns of males, placing females at a disadvantage. For this reason, it is important that classrooms incorporate cooperative learning strategies that better fit the model for female cognitive development.

The Johns Hopkins Team Learning Project. In general, cooperative learning describes a method of instruction in which small groups of students of all performance levels work together toward a group goal. Students are responsible for their groupmates' learning as well as their own. The Johns Hopkins Team Learning Project has researched and developed a number of methods that incorporate team rewards, individual accountability, and equal opportunity for success. "Team rewards" means that group success, not individual achievement, is praised. "Indi-

vidual accountability" means that a groups' success depends on the success of each group member. Students tutor and help one another to prepare for quizzes or tournaments during which the students work on their own. "Equal opportunity for success" means that individual students contribute to the group score by improving their own past performance. This ensures that high, average, and low achievers are equally challenged to do their best, and every member's achievement is equally valued.

A general model for cooperative learning, called the Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD), was developed by the Johns Hopkins project. Students are assigned to four-member learning teams that are mixed in performance level, sex, and ethnicity. After the teacher presents a lesson, team members help one another master the material. Finally, all students take individual quizzes and may not help one another. Students' quiz scores are compared to their own past averages, and points are awarded based on how well students meet or exceed their own earlier performances. The Johns Hopkins project has developed variations, such as tournaments or games instead of quizzes, and has designed formats for specific subjects and individual learning rates.

There have been extensive research studies documenting the success of these learning strategies for all types of students. Results include improved academic achievement, more favorable attitudes toward school, increased cooperativeness, altruism, more positive intergroup relations, and increased feeling of individual control over school activities. Cooperative learning results in particularly high achievement gains for Black and Hispanic students, and it is particularly helpful where girls are pressured by their families or culture not to outperform boys. While the strategies themselves are gender-neutral, learning in a cooperative environment can enable young women to take a more active role in a setting that emphasizes both group effort and individual success without resorting to individual competition.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Girls who are having trouble academically should be provided with remedial instruction.

While schools need to experiment with more ways of providing remedial instruction for all students, there are many times when at-risk girls require specialized attention. Sadker and Sadker (1981) found that "girls are more likely to be invisible members of the classroom. Teachers talk to them less, provide them with fewer directions, counsel them less, and give them fewer rewards." At-risk and problem boys often call attention to themselves, while at-risk girls may slip past unnoticed. Girls may hesitate to ask for help during or after class. Yet, once they are in remediation programs, girls respond particularly well to the special attention they receive.

Summer Training and Education Program. One promising approach to remediation is the Summer Training and Education Program (STEP) developed by Public/Private Ventures, a nonprofit corporation. Its aim is to increase basic reading and math skills, address the "learning loss" that many disadvantaged students experience over the summer, and increase students' "life skills," including knowledge about substance abuse, ways to avoid pregnancy, and personal decision making. Although it is aimed at both male and female at-risk students, we are highlighting this program because it provides the special attention to which girls respond. In addition, its emphasis on decision making and the consequences of sexual activity and pregnancy are especially pertinent to girls of this age and risk group.

STEP is a two-summer program that offers fourteen and fifteen year olds part-time employment, individual instruction in reading and math skills, and group instruction in Life Skills and Opportunities (LSO). The work experience (at least eighty hours) is funded by the federal Summer Youth Employment and Training Program. Students are also paid for the ninety hours they spend in remediation and the eighteen hours of LSO instruction. This offers a special incentive to most poor youth, whose highest priority during the summer is securing income. In addition, participants receive academic and other support services during the intervening school year.

Most importantly, STEP works. Comparisons of preprogram and postprogram testing show that students were largely able to negate learning loss in reading and made actual gains in math. There was also significant impact on their knowledge of contraception, pregnancy, and sexually related behavior. According to the STEP evaluation, the combination of work-experience, LSO training, and remedial instruction "may be crucial in providing the economic incentive and practical knowledge necessary for continued participation in regular schooling."

The Homework Hotline. The hotline is another example of specialized remedial instruction. Organized by the Girls Club of San Diego and funded by the state of California, this program is an extension of the Girls Club overall comprehensive tutoring program. The hotline provides academic aid via the telephone to members and nonmembers who cannot attend the club's regular assistance program. Four tutors—graduate students in various specializations at the University of California at San Diego—are available during hotline hours. Each has access to the textbooks used by the San Diego County schools.

This program is very well received. School principals and counselors speak highly of the hotline and its positive effect on students, especially in minority communities. More than 55 percent of the callers are Spanish-speaking students who are experiencing difficulty with their schoolwork because of the language barrier. In addition, the program is particularly good for girls whose families, for cultural reasons, do not allow them to leave home to participate in the normal after-school tutoring program.

Both the STEP program and Homework Hotline are administered by entities outside of the school, but work in conjunction with school programs. This kind of flexible cooperation is needed to more effectively provide young women with academic support.

Activities to Enhance Self-Esteem

RECOMMENDATION 3. Institutionalized mentor programs should provide girls with opportunities to identify with female role models who have nontraditional occupations.

To build self-esteem, young women must anticipate a positive future with opportunities for education, employment, and careers worth planning and preparing for while they are in school. But at-risk girls, from single-parent homes where the mother has dropped out or is uneducated or unemployable, need role models to show them what they can become. This is especially important in the prevention of early pregnancies. But when young women are already pregnant or parenting, mentoring programs can demonstrate possibilities beyond the cycle of unemployment, welfare, and intergenerational poverty. The following programs cover a range of mentoring possibilities both inside and outside the schools.

Applied Leadership Training for Youth. Originated in 1977 by the Camp Fire Girls of Tucson, Arizona, this program matches community volunteers with an adolescent, usually a girl, who is a status offender or is otherwise in trouble. The teen/adult pair work as co-leaders for Camp Fire Club meetings, which are typically located in minority or low-income sections of the city. The young women earn a small stipend for their work, improve leadership and planning skills, gain job experience, and strengthen their self-esteem by acting as role models for younger children. In addition, they meet twice a month with their co-leaders for social activities and informal counseling. The adults get to know the teenagers, act as mentors, and gauge the teens' progress and readiness for increased responsibility.

This is a highly successful program that is operated completely outside the school system. The program's dropout rate is very low. The Camp Fire staff continually monitors the juvenile court records to see if program participants are referred to the court again. Only one student has ever been so referred.

School Age Mother. The primary goal of the School Age Mother (SAM) in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, is to keep pregnant and parenting students from dropping out. This program has changed over the years with the needs of the district. It began in 1977 by serving only the Beaver Dam school district; in 1981, it expanded to surrounding districts. This expansion worked to stabilize the program, maintaining a constant level of support despite demographic fluctuations. In 1985, the Beaver

Dam district joined with the other school districts to offer a child care facility for school-age parents. Besides providing basic care for the babies, the Child Care Lab requires that mothers spend time in the lab with their infants, participate in group counseling, and become involved with the mentor program. The mentors are trained mothers who meet individually with the students for about three hours a month. Preliminary evaluations indicate that this relationship has helped the students develop their self-esteem, receive encouragement for personal growth, and have new experiences that provide insights into alternative life-styles.

Students are also provided with a "pull-out" program (taking students out of their regular classroom) where they can earn credits toward graduation. Pregnant students attend the special program whenever they feel uncomfortable in regular classrooms, and they can stay for up to four months after the child is born or until the beginning of the new semester. The girls attend classes in the morning and use the afternoon for health care, private counseling, work experiences, or other special programs. They are eligible for special tutorial help and assistance from the school district's psychologist, school nurse, social worker, and vocational counselor.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Extracurricular activities should provide opportunities for girls to act as key participants rather than supportive elements to a male-dominated activity.

Extracurricular activities provide opportunities for students to develop new interests, knowledge, and skills in a variety of settings. In sports or as members of a debating team, students get the chance to challenge and improve themselves. Such programs should be substantive—involving more than the waving of "pom-poms" at football games—and accessible to both boys and girls. Although the enactment of Title IX increased the number of young women participating in after-school sports, many schools do not provide the same enthusiasm and support to girls' teams as they do to boys'.

PEER Power. Run by the Chicago Public Schools since 1984, this school-based program for at-risk junior high girls is currently located in eleven schools in communities that have high rates of adolescent pregnancy, infant mortality, and school dropout. Twenty girls from each school are randomly selected to participate in the program, and each school is staffed by a trained teacher, co-leader, and parent volunteer. Parental consent is required and parental involvement is strongly encouraged. The students meet once a week for two hours and participate in a program that has four major components: health awareness, life skills enrichment, life options exploration, and parental involvement.

The program's first hour, which is the last period of the school day, is primarily devoted to group guidance and counseling, including discussions on health, decision making, self-esteem, parenting awareness, human development, alcohol

and drug abuse, and career awareness. Community members sometimes address the group, and students talk about career development and selecting school courses. In the Life Options Exploration component, each student is required to do a Career Research Project in which they choose a career, research it, and report on that career. Students take field trips, and local professionals visit the project to provide information and mentoring.

The second hour, immediately after school, is principally used for extracurricular activities. Under the category of Life Skills Enrichment, students engage in creative projects, field trips, and tutoring other students. Students are encouraged to write plays, raps, or songs; they also make crafts such as quilts, dresses, jewelry, pottery, or needlepoint. In order to highlight these accomplishments, once a year all PEER groups invite the community and participating schools citywide to a Prevention Showcase Program.

When the program was first initiated, participating students received small stipends based on the achievement of good school attendance and grades. The rationale for this approach was to provide motivation; few participating girls got weekly allowances or "reward money" at home. In addition, some students gave up after-school job hours to attend the program. Some community members, however, opposed what they felt was "paying children to go to school." Also, as the program expanded, this system of payment was too expensive to maintain. As a result, a new system provides all participants with rewards (e.g., game tickets or restaurant coupons) and also offers prizes such as calculators or watches for which students can compete. "Minigrants" of $250 are available at each school. Parents are encouraged to visit the project weekly and to participate in all activities. Parent activities include an initial orientation, monthly parent workshop sessions, quarterly parent/child workshop sessions, mother/daughter days, and materials for parents to use with their adolescents at home. Girls are given home activity sheets each week.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Counseling and related activities (when needed) should be available to enhance girls' self-esteem.

Support groups can also be a valuable tool in working with at-risk teenage girls. Such groups can foster cooperation, create a supportive atmosphere, and provide real assistance in meeting practical problems. Troubled girls, who often lack basic social and problem-solving skills, are helped to recognize their own problems and feelings. Through talking with others, they are able to gain perspective on who they are and what they would like to become.

The Discovery Links Project. Run by Camp Fire, Inc., in Klamath Falls, Oregon, this project works with female adolescents, age eleven through sixteen, who are having trouble in school. Many have experienced multiple detentions and low grades. At the beginning of group sessions, girls are presumed to be lacking in the

skills necessary for forming relationships or thinking about themselves in constructive ways. But through discussions that focus on matters of great interest to young adolescents—the self and personal autonomy—girls gradually gain competency in their ability to maintain focus; see cause-and-effect relationships; and recognize and have empathy for expressions of anger, sadness, caring, and other emotions. As the students' thinking and response skills grow, group sessions focus on developing problem-solving skills.

The Discovery Links Project holds youth group sessions that meet weekly outside of school and are structured like regular Camp Fire meetings (allowing participants to move easily into already-existing Camp Fire groups whenever they are ready). Parent groups familiarize adults with the problem-solving process, so they can reinforce and support their daughters' behavior at home. There is an opportunity for girls who successfully complete the program to become co-leaders for other groups, enhancing their sense of usefulness and self-esteem. An advisory council, with representation from schools, the county juvenile department, local civic leaders, and the Camp Fire Board, develops resources, recruits volunteers, and coordinates this program with other services available to students. This program has succeeded in a number of areas, producing a decrease in the number of detentions and an improvement in grades for participating students.

The Early Single Parenting Project. Started in San Francisco in 1977 by two social workers who were single parents, this project offers new single mothers of all ages a twelve-week structured support group. The goal is to provide a nonthreatening environment in which they can gain emotional support, share practical experiences and survival strategies, form a lasting support system, and make single parenting a positive experience. After the program's initial success, the project staff met with representatives of many San Francisco organizations who wanted to develop or modify their own group support programs for teen parents. The project's replication afforded its originators an opportunity to observe their model in different settings.

Facilitators of teen support groups reported many benefits for the members, including a nurturing environment that helps build self-esteem, a support structure, and validation of their experience as parents. The group structure combines freedom with limits, paralleling the dual nature of many adolescents who simultaneously crave dependence and independence. Not all the teen parent support groups met with equal success, demonstrating that great care must be taken when adapting adult models for use by young people. Facilitators stress that groups must be flexible and emphasize a trusting relationship between teens and adult leaders. Other problems include time constraints when the group is structured as part of the school day, the need to require group sizes limited to five or six, and the mandatory (and sometimes reluctant) participation of some teens who are required to join a group in order to receive other services.

Think Again. This videotape is designed to encourage young women to complete high school. It can be incorporated into a larger prevention program. An accompanying booklet provides additional information on female dropout and guidance for presenting the videotape to teachers, administrators, counselors, and student groups.

The Rural Alternatives Institute, producer of the film, taped interviews with young women who describe, in personal terms, why they dropped out, the consequences, their regrets, and their desire to return to school. These young women dropped out for a variety of reasons—parenting, marriage, peer pressure, family and social problems, and difficulties associated with minority status. They are shown in a variety of unrewarding jobs—at a bingo hall, cafeteria, hardware store, and laundramat—and all urge potential dropouts to "think again." Because the girls are ethnically mixed and discuss different motivations for dropping out, the film is appropriate for a wide range of audiences.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Parents should receive counseling and education on how to support their daughters' education.

Counseling and education for parents is important; negative parental attitudes can defeat a program. Many projects discussed in this section have sought the cooperation and support of parents. The PEER program in the Chicago Public Schools, described above, encourages parents to participate in all project activities. Workshops and other special events are held to educate parents and engage their interest. The Discovery Links project in Klamath Falls, Oregon, organizes parent groups with the purpose of enabling participants to support and reinforce the problem-solving skills their daughters are learning. Parental and parent/child counseling are also available when needed.

Two programs that will be described below emphasize parental involvement. The Family Learning Center in Leslie, Michigan, includes the extended family in counseling to build a supportive environment for teen parents. Ysleta Girls Count! in El Paso, Texas, holds a parents night to help parents collectively encourage their daughters' career aspirations.

Coordination of Services for Academic and Nonacademic Needs

RECOMMENDATION 7: Schools must coordinate with outside agencies and organizations to provide students with access to needed services.

The Family Learning Center. This center in Leslie, Michigan, has a comprehensive program for teen parents. Located in a rural environment where it is often difficult to find and coordinate services, this program serves seven rural school districts. It offers public and mental health counseling, social and legal services through county agencies, and continuing secondary education and job prepara-

tion—all at one site. The primary goal is to keep teen parents and pregnant girls in school, while at the same time offering child care, family education, and vocational training. The teens' parents are involved in the program whenever possible, creating an intergenerational support system. The program works with teen fathers as well as teen mothers.

Since 1974, the center has operated two mobile units that serve as alternative education sites on the Leslie High School campus. Students from the seven districts are picked up by mini-van or bus, and they are offered small classes, individualized schedules, job preparation, and counseling. The normal high school curriculum is used, with students attending regular classes whenever possible. The center operates a day-care center, and specific times are set aside when the teen parents take responsibility for their children. Pregnant teens receive prenatal care, and the center coordinates on-site and home visits by mental health nurses. The program makes every effort to relieve the stress and anxiety involved in teen parenting, thus reducing the possibility of child abuse and neglect.

Results from the Family Learning Center are significant and well documented. Ninety percent of seniors graduate, a rate that is high not only for the area, but for the nation. The number of seventh to eleventh graders who enter the program and then remain in school is also over 90 percent. Program participants improve their grade point averages and also have fewer pregnancy-related health problems. Their infants have higher birth weights and fewer respiratory problems.

The larger community has shared in the benefits and responsibilities of the Family Learning Center. A Head Start program was started in Leslie, and Michigan State University interns are placed at the center. Community residents regularly donate clothing, food, children's toys, and equipment to the Center; landlords tell the program about rental vacancies; employers give information about jobs; and the community newspaper prints positive articles about the center. The Family Learning Center has become a model for programs in many other rural districts.

RECOMMENDATION 8: School environments must be flexible enough to accommodate students' individual learning and service needs.

As discussed above, at-risk students often need the kind of help that is not generally available at school. In addition, schools may need to be more flexible in order to assist at-risk students. A young woman who needs a partial schedule because she can't get a baby-sitter until third period does not fit into a standard school schedule. Neither does a student who will be absent from final examinations because of her delivery date. And neither does the young woman who stays home because she has a sick child. Most schools don't recognize such an absence as an excused one.

A School-based, Noncurricular Model for Pregnant and Parenting Teens. Established in 1986 by the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and funded through the Departments of Health and Human Services and Labor, this project was designed to determine the effectiveness of a counselor/advocate who works in the school to provide students with access to the academic, health, employment, and other services they need to complete their education. The project is aimed at pregnant and parenting students and was piloted in two schools in Wisconsin and Maryland.

The counselor/advocate identifies adolescents who need services and enrolls them in the program. Advocates establish case-management files, coordinate services referrals and academic services, work with school personnel to facilitate scheduling and other flexibility for students, and provide ongoing help and moral support. A counselor/advocate will call students and inquire about absences, arrange alternative academic programs, ensure that students receive access to appropriate nutritional information and prenatal care, and identify needed day-care facilities.

Each school district involved with the NASBE project has established a problem-solving group responsible for ongoing project operation and policy. Composed of school district officials and community agency representatives, this group forms the network of referral services. The counselor/advocate periodically reports to the group and relies upon its members to provide assistance or influence with schools and agencies. The group will ultimately form a link with state policymakers regarding appropriate programs and policies for pregnant and parenting students.

The NASBE model is a relatively low-cost option for providing services to pregnant and parenting students. Data is still being gathered for a final evaluation, but preliminary results show that most of the faculty and teachers are familiar with the program, like it, and feel that it is working. At the Maryland project site during the 1982–88 school years, the counselor/advocate dealt with 147 students. Of these, she kept case-management files on 109, which officially enrolled them in the program as pregnant or parenting students. The counselor/advocate typically met with these students once a week for the entire school year. Of the 109 students enrolled in the program, 96, or 88 percent, either remained in school or transferred to another school. Of the 77 students who remained at the site, 70 percent earned enough credits to either progress to the next grade or to graduate.

In the Wisconsin program, there were 76 students enrolled; most of them were referred by teachers. Of these students, 66 (87 percent) either remained in school or transferred to another school or alternative program. Of the students who remained at the site, 69 percent earned enough credits to progress to the next grade or graduate. According to the Children's Defense Fund (1986), 61 percent of teen mothers do not finish high school; thus, students in the pilot schools are being retained at higher rates.

Bias-free Interactions with Teachers and Administrators

RECOMMENDATION 9: Adequate teacher training must be available to promote student/teacher interactions that are free of sex and race biases.

Gender/Ethnic Expectations and Student Achievement (GESA). This program helps teachers become aware of and improve student/teacher interaction patterns, especially regarding gender equity. Developed by Dolores Grayson and first piloted in Los Angeles in 1983, it currently operates in thirty-eight states. The underlying assumption is that only through equitable treatment will the needs and potential of all students be served. The program consists of five "workshop-observation-feedback" units; each unit lasts about a month. Units are based on the five major areas of gender disparity: instructional interaction, classroom grouping and organization, classroom control, enhancing self-esteem, and the evaluation of student performance. The three-hour workshop sessions take place after school with groups of twenty to thirty-six teachers. Participants break into clusters of four, and over the next month, each teacher observes and is observed by the other three in a classroom setting. The observers code, by gender, the teacher/student interactions studied at each workshop.

A field evaluation of this program took place in Los Angeles in 1984, and a formal validation study was undertaken in 1985–86. Higher achievement gains in reading and mathematics were attained by students of GESA-trained teachers. Pre- and posttraining observations revealed that although teachers still favored boys with more attention, they did so to a much lesser extent. Participating teachers reported an increase in nonstereotyped interactions, materials, and activities. There are also indications that the program has generic benefits; it not only decreased disparity between genders, but also between ethnic groups and students of differing abilities and socioeconomic status.

Expanding Staff Potential in High Technology (ESP) Seminars. These seminars, run by the Alabama Department of Education and Wallace State Community College, introduce and explain two manuals that help educators understand Title IX and how to implement it. The *Legal Framework Guide* provides laws and related legislation to assist personnel in understanding and implementing Title IX. *The Curriculum Guide* is a collection of ideas, activities, and resources designed to help educators provide students with an understanding of the historical, current, and future perspectives of men, women, and work; an understanding of themselves, their own interests, skills, and abilities; and student career planning, which considers a broad range of potential jobs and access routes. By the end of the seminar, participants have developed plans for their own schools or districts to resist sex stereotyping, to counsel students into nontraditional careers, and to recruit local business and industrial personnel to serve as role models.

Encouragement to Enroll in Nontraditional Courses and to Enter Nontraditional Careers

RECOMMENDATION 10: Girls must be encouraged to explore various career options and to prepare for nontraditional careers by enrolling in math, science, and other nontraditional courses.

It isn't easy for a young woman to enter a career field that has been traditionally considered "male," and many girls don't even consider doing so. Young girls limit their options as they opt out of science and mathematics courses and are therefore unable to train for a number of jobs, both traditional and nontraditional. The programs described under this recommendation help young adults think about and prepare for a range of future options.

Ysleta Girls Count! This is a school district program to assist middle school girls who have already demonstrated proficiency in mathematics. The project is located in El Paso, Texas, a city that is relatively poor and about 80 percent Hispanic. Its purpose is to help participants (1) take more math classes, (2) significantly increase their PSAT mathematics scores, and (3) reduce their anxiety about mathematics. Students—a minority of whom are at-risk or disadvantaged because of drug abuse, disruptive homes, or poor school attendance—attend a week-long summer seminar in creative mathematical concepts and visit potential career sites such as universities, hospitals, and banks. Mentoring and parent education are important elements of the program, since many participating girls have been discouraged from outperforming boys. Parent education helps parents collectively support the concept of female achievement. In the school year that follows the summer seminar, participating girls meet with mentors, visit the mentors' job site, and complete a group project. After the year-long program, the project staff tracks participants to make sure that they are guided into advanced courses in secondary school. The business community, universities, and the media have all encouraged and supported this Ysleta Independent School District program. The Ysleta program is a fine example of how a school district, in cooperation with the community, can encourage young women to enroll and excel in nontraditional courses.

Choices. This is one aspect of the Girls Clubs' four-pronged approach to teen pregnancy prevention. The program is based on the philosophy that across cultural groups, young women with higher education and career aspirations are less likely to become teen parents. Girls Club leaders in Santa Barbara, California, developed the *Choices* curriculum, and it was subsequently adopted in the curriculum of the Santa Barbara school system in 1981–82. Published as *Choices: A Teen Woman's Journal of Self-Awareness and Personal Planning*, the curriculum is now used in schools and Girls Clubs across the country.

Choices takes the reader through the process of planning for the future and presents a realistic appraisal of the emotional, financial, and social implications of early childbearing. Participants in the course must visualize their life from the present to the age of sixty; they prepare rigorous personal and family budgets for the lives they'd like to lead. In the process, they develop a set of personal goals and objectives and an individual plan to reach them. The program's objectives are to increase

- knowledge about available careers, salaries associated with those careers, and the income required to support oneself in adult life
- knowledge about a woman's present and future roles in the labor force and in family life
- knowledge about the economic, social, emotional, and physical aspects of childbearing
- self-esteem and self-reliance
- positive attitudes about nontraditional careers
- skills in the areas of decision making, formation of values, development of personal goals and objectives, assertiveness, identification of aptitudes and interests, family planning, and career research

The program has no formal evaluation; instead, program users evaluate its effectiveness according to the goals they have set. For example, school administrators evaluate the program according to the participants' final grades.

The Choices Initiative in Wisconsin. The initiative was established to stimulate collaboration among Wisconsin agencies to address the issues of sexual abuse, pregnancy, education, vocational education, and academic underpreparation—issues that were identified as interdependent problems by a special advisory committee on the female adolescent. The interagency collaboration was established by the Wisconsin Women's Council, a state agency established by the legislature in 1983 to improve the status of women in Wisconsin. Among its many activities, the council conducts state agency dialogues, sponsors conferences, identifies barriers to women in education and the work force, and maintains an inventory of state and national women's associations.

The interagency committee—consisting of social service agencies; schools; job training resources; advocacy groups; civic organizations; and the Departments of Public Instruction, Health and Human Services, and Industry, Labor, and Human Relations—encourages communities to develop programs to help young women. A Choices Conference was held in May of 1985 to provide technical assistance to communities. Three demonstration projects (rural, urban, and suburban) were established to help meet the objectives listed above. Each demonstration site used the Girls Clubs' *Choices* curriculum and other strategies based on the particular

problems in that locale. A mid-sized city, where single parents living in poverty was the biggest problem, used a media campaign and public forums to build support for the *Choices* concept. In Milwaukee, where the primary problem is student pregnancy, individual student plans, student support groups, and a community task force were formed. At the rural site, where the single biggest problem is the dropout of Native American girls, a variety of approaches helped girls prepare for decision making, nontraditional careers, and their future roles as workers and family members. Evaluations show that the project is generally meeting its goals of school retention and continued project participation by students. It has been strongly supported by the state superintendent of education, and the governor has proposed that it be institutionalized in the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services.

The Job Corps. The corps is a training and employment program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor to better prepare disadvantaged youth to either get and hold jobs, further their education or training, or enter the Armed Forces. Major corporations, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies manage and operate over one hundred Job Corps centers nationwide. Enrollees are youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one who are impoverished and unemployed and have volunteered for the program. They are typically relocated to residential centers for an intense program offering a range of services that are 50 percent basic education and 50 percent vocational skills training. Each enrollee is tested and screened to assess skills, aptitudes, and interests. Based on the results, an individualized development plan is developed for each corps member. Enrollees progress through the program at their own pace; competition is de-emphasized and individual growth is encouraged. As corps members complete vocational training, they are assigned to work experience programs where they apply their new skills and knowledge to a job for a period of four to six weeks. In the residential center, corps members participate in meetings and group counseling sessions and are responsible for helping maintain their own belongings and the center. Each member's progress is evaluated on an ongoing basis, formally and informally. Upon graduation, members receive assistance finding jobs, apartments, and meeting other needs.

In 1985, of the 63,020 youths enrolled in Job Corps, 31.8 percent were female. According to a 1982 evaluation, there were differential impacts by sex. Females without children tended to have larger gains in earnings, education, health, and reductions in welfare; males were more likely to have entered into military service or reduced unemployment benefits. Females with children before or after Job Corps showed little gain. The same report showed that former corps members had increases in employment, earnings, high school diplomas or equivalent degrees, and college attendance; better health; and a reduction in the receipt of financial welfare assistance.

Summary

When we collectively examine these programs, several themes emerge. First, young women at risk need a coordinated network of services in order to overcome barriers to school success. These barriers are formidable and persistent, and without attention to both academic and nonacademic needs significant progress is unlikely.

Second, these programs highlight the critical importance of adults in these young women's lives. Whether that adult is a teacher, counselor, youth service worker, or mentor, the opportunity to interact with successful adults has a powerful effect on the aspirations and self-esteem of the young women.

Finally, it is critical that schools and communities collaborate closely in order to provide the appropriate support services. This has implications for schools. For example, it is critical that teachers, as well as other service providers, understand the complex nature of the kinds of problems many young women face. When schools, youth-serving organizations, and other public agencies such as health and employment training use each other's programs, staff, and information effectively, young women at risk will have fewer obstacles to overcome.

Promising Policy Development

There are a number of state policy initiatives that show promise in encouraging school retention. Most such initiatives are aimed at at-risk students in general, although some specifically highlight pregnant and parenting teenagers. States are most likely to enact policies aimed at at-risk youth of both sexes. We believe that policymakers who plan dropout prevention initiatives must be aware of the particular problems that prevent some girls from finishing high school. State policy initiatives should reflect an emphasis on helping young women and provide blueprints for local school districts and schools to follow. Some policy mechanisms were discussed on pages 21–22 in Part 1.

Promising Programs and the States' Role

In this chapter, we will discuss state action to support programs such as the ones listed above. It is important that governors and state legislatures support at-risk initiatives because the education community cannot, by itself, command the necessary resources or media attention. Successful programs to prevent dropout are collective endeavors. Governors, legislatures, state boards of education, state departments of education, and others can provide the resources, technical assistance, and policies that encourage (or require) the kinds of approaches we have described. The following state initiatives illustrate different approaches to dropout prevention. In each example we have described implications for girls.

Wisconsin

The most comprehensive state approach to dropout prevention is provided by the 1985 Wisconsin Act 29. This act defines at-risk children, requires every school board to identify such children annually in each district, and requires each board to develop a plan for effective programming. "Children at-risk" are defined as being behind their age or grade level in mathematics, reading, or in the number of credits attained. In addition, such students are, or have been, any of the following:

- a school dropout
- a student with twenty or more unexcused absences during the previous school year
- a delinquent who has been found guilty by the judicial system of an offense
- a parent

All school districts with fifty or more dropouts or a dropout rate exceeding 5 percent for the previous school year, must submit plans for improvement to the state superintendent of schools. An annual report must follow with information on attendance, retention, and high school graduation rates for students enrolled in at-risk programs.

Wisconsin's initiative is worth noting because it's comprehensive, requires accurate data collection at the school level, requires a reporting process to the state, and includes incentive money to help school districts improve. The State Department of Education published *Children At Risk: A Resource and Planning Guide* to help local schools and districts understand the legislative requirements and to provide suggestions for fulfilling it. District school boards are required to appoint a "children at risk" coordinator to oversee implementation and report to the Department of Public Instruction. The *Planning Guide* includes descriptions of exemplary programs at the secondary level.

The legislation took effect in August of 1985. After one year of implementation (according to a Department of Public Instruction staff person), 87 percent of the school districts had participated in a one-day, in-service training session about implementing the legislation. In addition, the legislation had a "ripple effect" on social legislation. Major social programs are being adjusted to work in conjunction with the at-risk legislation. First, the already-existing Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) was required to use at-risk designations consistent with the legislative definition. Second, the state's welfare reform package cited this legislation and incorporated requirements that Aid for Dependent Children (AFDC) school-age parents (or recipients of AFDC parents) must be enrolled as full-time students to receive benefits.

Implications for Girls

Unlike most states, Wisconsin requires accurate data collection disaggregated by race and sex. In addition, teen parents who are behind grade level or who are not making sufficient academic progress are automatically classified as "at-risk" and targeted for assistance. As a result, more attention will be paid to identifying and providing programs for school-age parents. In addition, the Choices program mentioned in the previous chapter was a state initiative aimed specifically at at-risk girls.

Oregon

In 1983, Oregon's governor appointed a Youth Coordinating Council to be administered by the State Department of Education. The council consists of fourteen members drawn from a variety of agencies, particularly education, the juvenile justice system, and employment. Its mission is to

- examine policies and programs serving at-risk youth
- draft policy and budget recommendations for the state of Oregon
- use available funds to develop exemplary at-risk programs
- work for the adoption of these programs throughout the state

School dropouts, potential dropouts, youth offenders, teen parents, and minority youth have been the focus of the council's efforts.

The council has, thus far, funded nine major demonstrations. For example, Project Success in Eugene provides intensive counseling to small groups of high school students who are potential dropouts. The project helps students find jobs and obtain services—job permits, medical exams, financial aid for interview clothing, personal counseling, and access to alternative education programs at community colleges. One part of the alternative education is the Student On-Leave Program that permits students to take a one-time, one-semester leave of absence during high school to explore career options. This kind of project illustrates Oregon's efforts to provide comprehensive youth programs that involve a variety of public and private agencies.

Another council-funded project, The Young Parents Program in Albany, Oregon, helps pregnant young women aged fourteen through twenty-one find and keep jobs. Students who need academic credits enroll in the local community college, with transportation and day care provided. Students also work at the day-care center to learn parenting skills.

Implications for Girls

Because of its independent status, the council has less traditional ties to state agencies and might be freer to try nontraditional approaches to helping at-risk girls. In 1987, the council contracted a detailed statewide study of dropout disaggregated by sex. The findings indicated that of a 25 percent state dropout rate, 53 percent were boys and 46 percent were girls.

North Carolina

North Carolina's dropout prevention effort began with a Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation grant to develop dropout demonstration programs. Just as three site models were about to be implemented, a state dropout prevention fund was created by the general assembly. This fund totaled 15 million dollars for 1985–86 and 20 million for 1986–87, meaning that funds were available to every school district in North Carolina. Part of the fund established a State Office of Dropout Prevention in the State Department of Education. Model programs were comprehensive and included planning, collaboration, and dropout prevention as integral parts of the entire school program. Model programs were used to test a variety of program

elements, including an interagency advisory council for dropout prevention, an educator's committee for dropout prevention, a dropout prevention coordinator on the central office staff, and joint training for interagency council members and program administrators.

Most of the state dropout prevention fund was used to staff in-school suspension programs (8 million dollars) in thirty-six school districts. About 4 million dollars was used for counseling high-risk students in seventy-five districts. The latter program was targeted to pregnant and parenting students, low achievers, truants, discipline problems, and economically and socially disadvantaged students. Remaining funds were scattered among a number of smaller programs, such as extended school day programs for remediation, half-time job placement specialists for every high school in the state, transition programs for people with disabilities to help them move into the work force, and special programs for high-risk students that targeted particular groups such as pregnant and parenting students, substance abusers, and juvenile offenders.

Worth noting is that the North Carolina legislature recognized dropout as a serious problem, appropriated funds, and created a position in the Department of Public Instruction to provide technical assistance and support to all school districts in the state. The state is testing a variety of approaches to determine which are most effective.

Implications for Girls

School districts can access state funds to test initiatives aimed at keeping young women in school. In addition, the model programs took a leading role in testing methods of data collection to better identify the magnitude and nature of the state's dropout problem. At the end of each school month, schools with grades seven through twelve must submit a summary on dropouts to the dropout prevention coordinator. The summary must include information about dropouts by sex, race, age, grade, socioeconomic background, parental level of education, competency scores, retention, absenteeism, reasons for dropout, and future plans. After two years of experimentation, this method of data collection was implemented throughout the state for the 1987–88 school year. As a result, program planners should have a good idea about which girls are dropping out and why.

Maryland

Maryland has two, interrelated initiatives aimed at helping pregnant and parenting students.

The Interdepartmental Committee on Teen Pregnancy. In 1984, Maryland established an Interdepartmental Committee on Teen Pregnancy. Composed of program

experts from the Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene, Employment and Economic Development, Human Resources, Education, the Office for Children and Youth, and the Juvenile Services Agency, the committee's purposes are to

- promote cooperation at state and local levels in order to improve programs and services for at-risk, pregnant, and parenting teens
- plan and implement an annual statewide interagency conference on teen pregnancy and parenting
- develop a statewide network to facilitate communication and cooperation between state and local levels

Each committee agency donates staff time to carry out activities related to the purposes above; the nonprofit Equality Center provides technical assistance and staff support. Though established by no formal legislation or interagency agreement, committeemembers have been working together for four years and are engaged with the following types of activities:

- *Incentive Grants.* The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene provides money that is administered through the Department of Education. Grants of up to $2,000 are provided to local school districts if they form interagency committees on teen pregnancy. At this point, all twenty-four local school districts have received grants.
- *Statewide Conferences.* The fifth conference was held in November of 1988. These conferences provide an opportunity for state personnel, local representatives, and child advocates to discuss programs, research, and issues related to teen pregnancy prevention and teen parenting.
- *Annual Networking Guide.* The guide describes incentive grant projects and lists the key contact people in each school district from all the agencies listed above.
- *Training Conference.* A spring conference provides training for program staff who work with teen pregnancy prevention and parenting programs.

Governor's Council on Adolescent Pregnancy. The Governor's Council acts as a complement to the above activities. Created by the state legislature in 1986, it resulted from the findings of a previous task force on teen pregnancy prevention and parenting. This council has one full-time staff person who meets regularly with the governor's cabinet. The group examines policy issues through four subcommittees:

- *Education.* Examines school policies, such as data collection, absenteeism, and ease of reentry for former dropouts
- *Legislative.* Educates the legislature on policy issues related to teen pregnancy prevention and parenting

- *Interagency.* Advocates for more effective coordination
- *Private Sector.* Examines ways that the private sector can help provide services, such as job opportunities and assisting young mothers with day-care payments

There is a formal structure within the council for communication with high-level state figures; there is also an informal structure through the subcommittees that uses the expertise of program staff to identify issues, concerns, and needed direction. This is an example of how an issue can be addressed through both formal and informal action. In addition, the issue of at-risk youth has received high visibility because of the governor's support. In 1990, the legislature will examine the work of the council to determine whether modifications are necessary and whether to continue supporting it. The council has been given enough time (four years) to determine which actions will be effective.

Implications for Girls

Both the state and local levels are active and, ideally, communicating and coordinating action so that pregnant and parenting teens can get the services they need. Available Maryland statistics offer no information about the specifics of dropout as they relate to girls. However, during the spring of 1987, the Department of Education appointed a statewide committee to develop a proposal to revamp the data collection methods used to produce education statistics. The committee's recommendations include: (1) new definitions for dropouts, graduates, and nontraditional graduates and (2) means to analyze dropouts by sex, race, age, and urban or rural setting.

Illinois

In 1983, the Illinois governor's office initiated a program called Parents Too Soon. Illinois has the highest infant mortality rate of any industrialized state, and the initiative was intended to reduce it. The governor's office initiated collaboration between the nine state agencies that were addressing issues related to infant mortality and teen pregnancy:

- State Board of Education
- University of Illinois Crippled Children's Program
- Department of Children and Family Services
- Department of Public Aid
- Department of Health
- Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities

- Department of Employment Security
- Department of Commerce and Community Affairs

The governor's office then allocated 12 million dollars in federal funds to Parents Too Soon—a collaborative effort to reduce infant mortality and teen pregnancy. In addition to pooling funds for a common effort, the Parents Too Soon initiative uses common funds to coordinate public relations. The governor's office thus coordinates program activities while giving visibility to the project.

The state has awarded contracts for direct services to 130 community agencies. Major activities to date are the following:

- Demonstration programs operated by the Department of Public Health. These programs provide young women with a range of services including prenatal care, baby care, and job training opportunities.
- Activities related to pregnancy prevention and parenting. These programs are operated by the Ounce of Prevention Fund, a private, nonprofit organization.
- A Young Parents Program that encourages school completion and job training for teen mothers.

In 1987, the Parents Too Soon initiative received a Ford Foundation Award as one of the ten most innovative programs in the country.

Implications for Girls

Parents Too Soon shows how a governor's office can coordinate the activities of nine agencies to promote common program goals, and at the same time give the whole endeavor status and visibility. A comprehensive set of activities has been undertaken to help teen mothers with health care, education, job training, and parenting.

Massachusetts

In 1985, Massachusetts passed an Education Reform Act establishing an Essential Skills Dropout Prevention Discretionary Grant Program. For 1987 (as of February 1987), 2.5 million dollars had been granted. Competitive grants are awarded to school districts that are trying to help students stay in school and graduate. Funding priority is given to school districts that (1) have high concentrations of students from low-income families, (2) have high concentrations of students deficient in basic skills, and (3) have documented high dropout rates for the past three years. Grants are awarded for program expansion, as well as for the planning and creation of new programs. Funding is restricted to programs serving students in grades seven through twelve. Special Remedial Program Grants are available for schools with high concentrations of students in grades one through nine who are failing basic

skills tests.

Each participating school district must create a Dropout Prevention Advisory Council that is broadly representative of the community to oversee program development and implementation. Dropout prevention programs have included remedial and tutorial programs, counseling programs, work-study or cooperative education, involvement with parents and community groups, help for pregnant and parenting teenagers, and processional development for school personnel. In 1987, forty-eight school districts received funds.

Implications for Girls

The funding criteria for the program described permit wide latitude in program design. Hence, it gives school districts an opportunity to develop new approaches to helping young women complete high school.

Conclusion

We have described a series of promising programs and policies to help young women complete high school. In order to ensure that these promising approaches are supported and expanded, local and state policymakers need to keep in mind the following agenda for action:

1. First and foremost, we need accurate information about the extent and nature of the dropout problem. This information is not currently available in most districts and states. We need to know how many students drop out of school, and we need that data disaggregated by race and sex. We need to know how many adolescent girls become pregnant and give birth. And, various agencies must have access to each other's information. Information must be coordinated between departments of education, health, social services, and employment.
2. We need good evaluation data on programs that appear promising. Equally important, such information needs to be shared among districts and states. There are many creative ideas about how to help young women finish school, as earlier descriptions in this paper show. Program providers at both the local and state levels have told us, however, that they feel they are reinventing the wheel. Communication networks need to be developed so that individuals in different states know what's promising and what's working.
3. Policymakers should take a close look at a promising feature of several programs described in this book: the case-management approach. This approach, which comes from social work rather than education, suggests that an effective strategy for high-risk students is to have someone well known within the school keep track of individual students who are at risk of school failure.
4. Schools need to take a leadership role in ensuring that young women and men have access to the necessary academic and support services to finish school. Schools must reach into the community in a variety of ways—to enlist volunteer support for mentoring programs, and to cooperate with various youth-serving agencies in providing students with extra services (such as counseling, day care, health care, and employment training). Schools may need to provide many of these services directly to students, although not all these services need to be provided by school personnel.
5. Finally, we need to promote changes in school structure to enhance the likelihood that young women will stay in school and earn a diploma. This means that secondary schools need to become more flexible in addressing the needs of individual students. For example, in order to accommodate young

needs of individual students. For example, in order to accommodate young women who are parents or who have other significant responsibilities that interfere with full-time school attendance, schools could be available at night, on weekends, and during the summer months. Schools can take an active role in job placement activities for students and ensure that such opportunities are bias-free. Schools can provide health care for students through outreach nurses or school-based clinics.

School personnel will have to learn new roles and responsibilities in terms of working with young people at risk. For example, teachers may assume some responsibility for identifying pregnant or parenting adolescents to appropriate personnel. At the same time, they need to be aware of the sensitivity and confidential nature of their information and behave accordingly.

Local and state policymakers can support the vision described within this book in a number of ways. Incentives can be given to schools and school districts that are willing to try promising approaches. Educators can take the lead in proposing interagency agreements or legislative initiatives that support collaboration and coordination between various agencies. Local and state policymakers can grant schools and school districts increased flexibility in terms of complying with certain requirements or regulations, as long as schools and districts are willing to be held accountable for agreed-upon outcomes.

Our goal is "schools that fit students," instead of requiring an increasingly diverse set of students to fit an antiquated structure. The result will be a more individualized education system, with attendant adults who have the skills and knowledge to help young women gain confidence, finish school, and pursue postsecondary education or obtain jobs commensurate with their interests and abilities.

Appendix A

Promising Programs

Instructional Strategies

The Johns Hopkins Team Learning Project
Robert E. Slavin
Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools
The Johns Hopkins University
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
(301) 338-8299

Remedial Instruction

Summer Training and Education Program (STEP)
Michael Bailin
Public/Private Ventures
399 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 592-9099

The Homework Hotline
Lorraine Johnson
Education Coordinator
Girls Clubs of San Diego
606 South 30th Street
San Diego, CA 92113
(619) 233-7722

Mentor Programs

Applied Leadership Training for Youth
JoAnne Jones
Executive Director
Tucson Area Council of Camp Fire, Inc.
2555 North Edith
Tucson, AZ 85716
(602) 325-6883

School Age Mother (SAM)
Emmet Weber
Curriculum and Personnel Manager
Unified School District
705 McKinley Street
Beaver Dam, WI 53916
(414) 887-7131

Extracurricular Activities

PEER Power
Doris M. Williams
Chicago Public Schools
1819 West Pershing Road
Chicago, IL 60609
(312) 890-8299

Counseling

The Discovery Links Project
Susan Basden
1905 Oregon Avenue
Klamath Falls, OR 97601
(503) 884-4884

Early Single Parenting Project
Deborah Lee/Evelyn Jackson
1005 Market Street, # 131
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 558-9493

Think Again
Dr. Ella Stotz
Rural Alternatives Institute
Box 163
Huron, SD 57350
(605) 352-7011

Parent Counseling

PEER Power (listed above)

Coordinated Services

The Family Learning Center
Jean Ekins
400 Kimbal Street, Portable No. 7
Leslie Public Schools
Leslie, MI 49251
(517) 589-9102

School Environments

School-based, Noncurricular Model for Pregnant and Parenting Teens
Janice Earle
National Association of State Boards of Education
1012 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 684-4000

Sex and Race Biases

Gender/Ethnic Expectations and Student Achievement (GESA)
Dolores A. Grayson
GrayMill Foundation
Route 1, Box 45
Earlham, IA 50072
(515) 834-2431

Expanding Staff Potential in High Technology (ESP)
Letha G. Weaver
Project Director
ESP in High Technology
Wallace State Community College
Hanceville, AL 35077-9080
(205) 352-6403

Nontraditional Courses and Careers

Ysleta Girls Count!
Evelyn Bell
Ysleta ISD
9600 Sims Drive
El Paso, TX 79958
(915) 595-5680

Choices
Jane Quinn
Director of Program Services
Girls Clubs of America
205 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10016
(212) 689-3700

The Choices Initiative in Wisconsin
The Wisconsin Women's Council
30 West Mifflin Street, Suite 512
Madison, WI 53702
(608) 266-2219

The Job Corps
Employment and Training Administration
U.S. Department of Labor
601 D Street, NW
Washington, DC 20213
(202) 535-0550

Appendix B

State Initiatives

Wisconsin

Dennis Van den Heuvel
State Department of Education
125 South Webster Street
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707
(608) 266-1723

Oregon

John Pendergrass
Youth Coordinating Council
Department of Education
700 Pringle Parkway, SE
Salem, OR 97310
(503) 378-3569

North Carolina

Anne Bryan
Dropout Prevention Coordinator
Department of Education
116 West Edenton Street
Raleigh, NC 27603-1712
(919) 733-5461

Maryland

Margaret Dunkle
Interdepartmental Committee on Teen Pregnancy
The Equality Center
1223 Giraud Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 462-7770

Bronwyn Mayden
Executive Director
Governor's Council on Adolescent Pregnancy
1123 North Entaw Street, Room 201
Baltimore, MD 21201
(301) 333-7948

Massachusetts

Dan French
Essential Skills Dropout Prevention Discretionary Grant Program
Department of Education
1385 Hancock Street
Quincy, MA 02169
(617) 770-7580

Illinois

Tom Berkshire
Parents Too Soon
Office of the Governor
State House, Room 203
Springfield, IL 62706
(217) 728-4775

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Female Dropouts: A New Perspective focuses a critical eye on the problem of girls who drop out of school. For the first time, we have a clear picture of who these girls are and the reasons that they leave. In this ground-breaking study, Project Director Janice Earle examines the stereotypes of female dropouts, showing conclusively that while some girls drop out of school because they are pregnant, the majority drop out for different reasons.

Earle describes background and educational characteristics associated with dropping out that apply to boys and girls equally, as well as the factors that affect girls in particular. The latter include mother's education level, socialization that teaches girls to be less assertive, differences in the way that girls learn, and teacher interaction patterns that favor boys. In a chapter entitled "Recommendations for Action," the research presented in this valuable resource is condensed into 10 practical recommendations for programs that deal with girls at risk. Descriptions of model programs that are currently being offered throughout the country conclude the study.

As director of the National Association of State Boards of Education's Youth Services Program, Janice Earle directs a number of projects that focus on at-risk youth. She has spoken extensively on this topic before such organizations as the Education Commission of the States, the National Education Association, and the National Governors' Association Task Force on High School Dropouts. Earle earned her Ph.D. in Education Policy, Planning, and Administration from the University of Maryland.

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